

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/21
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

In their preparation for this paper, candidates should ensure that they:

- have a grasp of a range of vocabulary relating to topics encountered in daily life
- can communicate information in the form of a note or brief letter/email, using straightforward vocabulary, structures and verbs
- feel confident in expressing their feelings, likes and dislikes.

General comments

In general, candidates handled this paper well. Candidates would benefit from practising more creative writing to help them prepare for the writing task in **Section 2**. They would also benefit from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well. Most errors occurred in response to **Questions 9 and 10**.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. The text took the form of an email from Nader about her visit to see her sister Salma. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. Some candidates struggled to answer **Questions 13 and 15** correctly.

Question 16

Candidates were asked to write a short message to their friend, giving three pieces of information: **(a)** where they are going, **(b)** what they are going to buy, and **(c)** when they are going to return home. There were three marks available for communication (1 mark for each element of the message) and two marks for the language used. The points of information are cued by a short Arabic stimulus supported by an illustration and the correct interpretation of the illustrations is important. Those parts of a candidate's answer which are not credited for communication are not considered for reward for language.

Candidates should be advised that there is nothing to be gained from expanding their answers to this exercise. There are no additional marks to be gained by adding to the required information and any time spent adding such embellishment, which is ignored by the Examiner, could be allocated more profitably to **Sections 2 and 3**. The most successful answers are those which manage to communicate the required information briefly, yet accurately.

This writing task was generally handled quite well. Some candidates struggled to provide an adequate response to this question. Responses often contained a number of grammatical and spelling errors, particularly in the use of times, but incorrect spellings were tolerated for communication provided that the meaning was clear.

The following is an example of a good answer to this question:

صديقي العزيز أحمد

أريد أن أذهب إلى السوق بعد الظهر لكي أشتري زهوراً لأمي فاليوم عيد ميلادها. وسأعود إلى البيت الساعة العاشرة مساءً.
إلى اللقاء.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 17–23

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. The passage took the form of an article about the environment. Sometimes a one- or two-word answer was all that was needed, as in **Questions 20, 21, and 22**, but provided that what the candidate had written contained the correct answer, additional material copied from the text was tolerated unless it was contradictory. The majority of candidates answered these questions well.

Exercise 2, Question 24

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write about their favourite sport. In their piece of writing, they were asked to complete three tasks: **(a)** to describe the different sports they like and why, **(b)** to say where they play their favourite sports and with whom and **(c)** to say which sports they would like to try in future and why. 10 marks were available for communication of the required elements and 5 marks were available for language.

In terms of the mark for language, candidates should aim to write reasonably accurate and understandable Arabic. The most successful candidates wrote simply and clearly, using a range of apt vocabulary and structures. They avoided attempts to convey over-complicated ideas for which they did not have sufficient command of the language. Less successful responses were characterised by short, abrupt sentences and various grammatical errors, particularly in the conjugation of the verb and in the use of tenses.

In terms of the mark for communication, candidates should be reminded that they must address all of the given bullet points in order to have access to the top marks.

Many candidates drew on their own experiences to help them answer the question, and there were a number of good answers where candidates clearly demonstrated that they were familiar with the topic and its associated vocabulary. The best candidates addressed all of the given bullet points very clearly in their responses, and the following is an example of a good answer to this question:

من لا يحب ممارسة الرياضة؟ أنا مثلاً أحب ممارسة السباحة في أيام الصيف لأن الجو حار ولأنني أشعر بالراحة النفسية. كما أحب ممارسة رياضة كرة القدم لأنني أجتمع خلالها مع أعز أصدقائي وتجعل جسدي قوياً وسريعاً في الجري، كما أنها تعلمني أهمية التعاون مع أعضاء الفريق. أمارس رياضة السباحة في البحر لأن بيتنا ليس بعيداً عنه وأحياناً أذهب إلى حوض السباحة المغلق في مدينتنا. وأما رياضة كرة القدم فأنا أمارسها غالباً في ملعب المدرسة أيام الدراسة وفي النادي الرياضي في إجازة المدرسة.

أحب أن أجرب رياضة تسلق الجبال، فقد سمعت أن الهواء يكون عالياً، وأن هذه الرياضة تجعل الساقين قويتين كما أن المتسلق يمكن أن يستمتع بالمناظر الخلابة.

Section 3

In this section, Examiners are looking not just for evidence that candidates are able to locate the correct information in the reading passages, but for signs of genuine comprehension, i.e. the ability to select the exact details required for the answer.

Exercise 1, Questions 25–30

In **Exercise 1**, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic, decide which of the given Arabic statements are صح and which are خطأ, and then go on to correct the false ones as simply as possible, in Arabic, using the material from the passage and in the style of the example given. While it is still sometimes possible to lift answers from the passage, candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer, as additional material copied indiscriminately may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is therefore important that candidates are trained to answer succinctly as the longer the answer, the higher the risk of including extra distorting material and invalidating an otherwise correct answer.

Generally, candidates struggled to correct the false statements, which often indicated a lack of understanding of the reading passage. A number of candidates ticked صح but then attempted to correct the statement. There is no need for candidates to provide a correction where they decide that the statement is true. A number of candidates could not answer **Question 28**.

Exercise 2, Questions 31–39

In this final exercise of the paper, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic and show their understanding of it by answering questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. This exercise requires responses to be sufficiently accurate to communicate the answer without ambiguity or distortion. This means that answers 'lifted' unselectively from the text may contain additional information or unclear information which can invalidate an answer. **Questions 31, 32 and 33** were generally answered quite well. A number of candidates had difficulty with **Questions 34, 35 and 36**.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/22
Reading and Directed Writing

Key messages

In their preparation for this paper, candidates should ensure that they:

- have a grasp of a range of vocabulary relating to topics encountered in daily life
- can communicate information in the form of a note or brief letter/email, using straightforward vocabulary, structures and verbs
- feel confident in expressing their feelings, likes and dislikes.

General comments

In general, candidates handled this paper well. Candidates would benefit from practising more creative writing to help them prepare for the writing task in **Section 2**. They would also benefit from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well. Most errors occurred in response to **Questions 9** and **10**.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. The text took the form of an email from Nader about her visit to see her sister Salma. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. Some candidates struggled to answer **Questions 13** and **15** correctly.

Question 16

Candidates were asked to write a short message to their friend, giving three pieces of information: **(a)** where they are going, **(b)** what they are going to buy, and **(c)** when they are going to return home. There were three marks available for communication (1 mark for each element of the message) and two marks for the language used. The points of information are cued by a short Arabic stimulus supported by an illustration and the correct interpretation of the illustrations is important. Those parts of a candidate's answer which are not credited for communication are not considered for reward for language.

Candidates should be advised that there is nothing to be gained from expanding their answers to this exercise. There are no additional marks to be gained by adding to the required information and any time spent adding such embellishment, which is ignored by the Examiner, could be allocated more profitably to **Sections 2** and **3**. The most successful answers are those which manage to communicate the required information briefly, yet accurately.

This writing task was generally handled quite well. Some candidates struggled to provide an adequate response to this question. Responses often contained a number of grammatical and spelling errors, particularly in the use of times, but incorrect spellings were tolerated for communication provided that the meaning was clear.

The following is an example of a good answer to this question:

صديقي العزيز أحمد
أريد أن أذهب إلى السوق بعد الظهر لكي أشتري زهوراً لأمي فاليوم عيد ميلادها. وسأعود إلى البيت الساعة العاشرة مساءً. إلى اللقاء.

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 17–23

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. The passage took the form of an article about the environment. Sometimes a one- or two-word answer was all that was needed, as in **Questions 20, 21, and 22**, but provided that what the candidate had written contained the correct answer, additional material copied from the text was tolerated unless it was contradictory. The majority of candidates answered these questions well.

Exercise 2, Question 24

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write about their favourite sport. In their piece of writing, they were asked to complete three tasks: **(a)** to describe the different sports they like and why, **(b)** to say where they play their favourite sports and with whom and **(c)** to say which sports they would like to try in future and why. 10 marks were available for communication of the required elements and 5 marks were available for language.

In terms of the mark for language, candidates should aim to write reasonably accurate and understandable Arabic. The most successful candidates wrote simply and clearly, using a range of apt vocabulary and structures. They avoided attempts to convey over-complicated ideas for which they did not have sufficient command of the language. Less successful responses were characterised by short, abrupt sentences and various grammatical errors, particularly in the conjugation of the verb and in the use of tenses.

In terms of the mark for communication, candidates should be reminded that they must address all of the given bullet points in order to have access to the top marks.

Many candidates drew on their own experiences to help them answer the question, and there were a number of good answers where candidates clearly demonstrated that they were familiar with the topic and its associated vocabulary. The best candidates addressed all of the given bullet points very clearly in their responses, and the following is an example of a good answer to this question:

من لا يحب ممارسة الرياضة؟ أنا مثلاً أحب ممارسة السباحة في أيام الصيف لأن الجو حار ولأنني أشعر بالراحة النفسية. كما أحب ممارسة رياضة كرة القدم لأنني أجتمع خلالها مع أعز أصدقائي وتجعل جسدي قوياً وسريعاً في الجري، كما أنها تعلمني أهمية التعاون مع أعضاء الفريق. أمارس رياضة السباحة في البحر لأن بيتنا ليس بعيداً عنه وأحياناً أذهب إلى حوض السباحة المغلق في مدينتنا. وأما رياضة كرة القدم فأنا أمارسها غالباً في ملعب المدرسة أيام الدراسة وفي النادي الرياضي في إجازة المدرسة.

أحب أن أجرب رياضة تسلق الجبال، فقد سمعت أن الهواء يكون عليلاً، وأن هذه الرياضة تجعل الساقين قويتين كما أن المتسلق يمكن أن يستمتع بالمناظر الخلابة.

Section 3

In this section, Examiners are looking not just for evidence that candidates are able to locate the correct information in the reading passages, but for signs of genuine comprehension, i.e. the ability to select the exact details required for the answer.

Exercise 1, Questions 25–30

In **Exercise 1**, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic, decide which of the given Arabic statements are صح and which are خطأ, and then go on to correct the false ones as simply as possible, in Arabic, using the material from the passage and in the style of the example given. While it is still sometimes possible to lift answers from the passage, candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer, as additional material copied indiscriminately may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is therefore important that candidates are trained to answer succinctly as the longer the answer, the higher the risk of including extra distorting material and invalidating an otherwise correct answer.

Generally, candidates struggled to correct the false statements, which often indicated a lack of understanding of the reading passage. A number of candidates ticked صح but then attempted to correct the statement. There is no need for candidates to provide a correction where they decide that the statement is true. A number of candidates could not answer **Question 28**.

Exercise 2, Questions 31–39

In this final exercise of the paper, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic and show their understanding of it by answering questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. This exercise requires responses to be sufficiently accurate to communicate the answer without ambiguity or distortion. This means that answers 'lifted' unselectively from the text may contain additional information or unclear information which can invalidate an answer. **Questions 31, 32 and 33** were generally answered quite well. A number of candidates had difficulty with **Questions 34, 35 and 36**.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/23
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Key messages

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- feel confident in expressing their feelings, likes and dislikes.

General comments

In general, candidates handled this paper well. Candidates would benefit from practising more creative writing to help them prepare for the writing task in **Section 2**. They would also benefit from reading more widely in the target language as this would help them to feel more confident when tackling **Section 3** of this paper.

Comments on specific questions

Section 1

Exercise 1, Questions 1–5

Most candidates answered these discrete questions correctly.

Exercise 2, Questions 6–10

The questions in this matching task were generally handled well.

Exercise 3, Questions 11–15

For this exercise, candidates were given a short text to read followed by five multiple choice questions. The text took the form of an email from Fatima about her visit to see her mother. As in the previous two exercises, these questions were answered well by the majority of candidates. Some candidates struggled to answer **Questions 14** and **15** correctly.

Question 16

Candidates were asked to write a short message to their mother, giving three pieces of information: **(a)** who they are going shopping with, **(b)** what they are going to buy, and **(c)** what they are going to do afterwards. There were three marks available for communication (1 mark for each element of the message) and two marks for the language used. The points of information are cued by a short Arabic stimulus supported by an illustration and the correct interpretation of the illustrations is important. Those parts of a candidate's answer which are not credited for communication are not considered for reward for language.

Candidates should be advised that there is nothing to be gained from expanding their answers to this exercise. There are no additional marks to be gained by adding to the required information and any time spent adding such embellishment, which is ignored by the Examiner, could be allocated more profitably to **Sections 2** and **3**. The most successful answers are those which manage to communicate the required information briefly, yet accurately.

This writing task was generally handled quite well. Some candidates struggled to provide an adequate response to this question. Responses often contained a number of grammatical and spelling errors, particularly in the use of tenses, but incorrect spellings were tolerated provided that the meaning was clear.

The following is an example of a good answer to this question:

أمي العزيزة:
ذهبت إلى السوق مع مجموعة من أصدقائي الذين تعرفينهم. سوف أشتري الموز ثم أذهب إلى السينما لمشاهدة فيلم جديد وبعد ذلك سأعود إلى البيت .
ولذلك علي

Section 2

Exercise 1, Questions 17–26

In this exercise, candidates were required to read a more extended passage of Arabic and to answer questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. The passage took the form of a letter from Mahmoud to his friend about how he and his family spend their leisure time. The majority of candidates answered these questions well. Where errors were made, these were usually in response to **Questions 22, 23, 24 and 25**.

Exercise 2, Question 27

In this writing task, candidates were asked to write about summer. In their piece of writing, they were asked to complete three tasks: **(a)** to describe the weather in summer, **(b)** to say which activities they enjoy in the summer and why and **(c)** to say where they would like to spend next summer and why. 10 marks were available for communication of the required elements and 5 marks were available for language.

In terms of the mark for language, candidates should aim to write reasonably accurate and understandable Arabic. The most successful candidates wrote simply and clearly, using a range of apt vocabulary and structures. They avoided attempts to convey over-complicated ideas for which they did not have sufficient command of the language. Less successful responses were characterised by short, abrupt sentences and various grammatical errors, particularly in the conjugation of the verb and in the use of tenses.

In terms of the mark for communication, candidates should be reminded that they must address all of the given bullet points in order to have access to the top marks.

Many candidates drew on their own experiences to help them answer the question, and there were a number of good answers where candidates clearly demonstrated that they were familiar with the topic and its associated vocabulary. The best candidates addressed all of the given bullet points very clearly in their responses, and the following is an example of a good answer to this question:

فصل الصيف أحد فصول السنة الأربعة، ويمتاز بحرارته المرتفعة وبخلو السماء من الغيوم التي عادة تحمل الأمطار ، ويكون النهار فيه طويلاً كما ترتفع الرطوبة في الجو ارتفاعاً قد يزعج بعض الناس وخاصة الأطفال وكبار السن.
في الصيف أحب أن أمارس رياضة السباحة لكي أخفف من حرارة جسمي ولأشعر بالنشاط والحيوية، كما أحب أن أزور المنطقة الجبلية لأن حرارة الجو هناك تكون عادة منخفضة، كما أحب ممارسة صيد السمك لأنني أكون قرب الماء فأشعر بلطافة الجو، وهذا يريحني جداً.
في الصيف القادم سأسافر إلى بريطانيا لأنني سمعت أن الجو هناك لطيف جداً وأحياناً يكون مطراً. وهي فرصة لزيارة المعالم والحدائق الجميلة كما سأتجول بالمركب في نهر التايمز الشهير.

Section 3

In this section, Examiners are looking not just for evidence that candidates are able to locate the correct information in the reading passages, but for signs of genuine comprehension, i.e. the ability to select the exact details required for the answer.

Exercise 1, Questions 28–33

In **Exercise 1**, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic, decide which of the given Arabic statements are صح and which are خطأ, and then go on to correct the false ones as simply as possible, in Arabic, using the material from the passage and in the style of the example given. While it is still sometimes possible to lift answers from the passage, candidates need to be very precise in what they choose for their answer, as additional material copied indiscriminately may invalidate an otherwise correct answer. It is therefore important that candidates are trained to answer succinctly as the longer the answer, the higher the risk of including extra distorting material and invalidating an otherwise correct answer.

Generally, candidates struggled to correct the false statements, which often indicated a lack of understanding of the reading passage. A number of candidates ticked صح but then attempted to correct the statement. There is no need for candidates to provide a correction where they decide that the statement is true. A number of candidates struggled with **Questions 28, 30, 31 and 33**.

Exercise 2, Questions 34–39

In this final exercise of the paper, candidates are required to read an extended passage in Arabic and show their understanding of it by answering questions on it, also in Arabic. The questions are asked in the same order as the information is presented in the passage. This exercise requires responses to be sufficiently accurate to communicate the answer without ambiguity or distortion. This means that answers 'lifted' unselectively from the text may contain additional information or unclear information which can invalidate an answer. Candidates often encountered difficulty with **Questions 34 and 38**.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/03
Speaking

Key messages

In preparing for, and conducting, the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination, centres should bear the following pointers in mind.

- Careful preparation by Examiners is essential
- Modern Standard Arabic should be used by both Examiner and candidate during the examination
- Examiners should adhere to the role play tasks as set out in the Teachers' Notes booklet
- If a candidate omits an element of a Role Play task, the Examiner may give an appropriate prompt
- Examiners should ensure that they ask questions which give candidates the opportunity to use past, present and future tenses in each of the conversation sections
- Examiners should make a clear distinction between the topic presentation/conversation and the general conversation
- Examiners must adhere to the timings stipulated in the Teachers' Notes booklet
- Examiners should vary the topics covered and should not ask all candidates the same series of questions
- Candidates should be asked both expected and unexpected questions
- To achieve high marks, candidates do not have to be of native speaker standard
- An Arabic version of the Teachers' Notes booklet is available for free download from the Cambridge website.

General comments

This paper is common to all candidates, whether they follow the Core curriculum or the Extended curriculum. This year, the full range of candidate performance was heard by Moderators.

Candidate performance

Overall, the standard of work produced by candidates was perceived to be about the same as last year. The best performances from candidates of all abilities were heard in centres where it was clear that oral work was a regular part of classroom activity and where candidates were familiar with the requirements of the Speaking examination. In such centres, the Examiner conducting the examination had prepared the role plays well, enabling candidates to show that they could communicate in a variety of everyday situations.

Candidates gained marks by following their cues and answering concisely. They were aware of the need to respond to unexpected questions on one task in each role play. The Examiner managed a smooth transition to the conversation sections and then pitched questions at a level appropriate to the candidate, while bearing in mind the descriptors of the mark scheme. Conversations were natural and candidates were given the opportunity to work in a variety of tenses, using a range of structures and vocabulary and covering a selection of different topics across both conversation sections.

In general, Examiners were aware of the need for spontaneity and conversations featured both predictable and unexpected questions. Candidates were given the opportunity to show that they could respond to questions on topics with which they may have been familiar, but which they had not over prepared.

A few centres need to work towards achieving greater spontaneity during the examination. The use of question banks is of course useful during the learning process. Then, once vocabulary and structures have been acquired, candidates should be encouraged to move gradually away from predictable banks of questions. If the same banks of questions which have been used in class are used in the examination room, there is little opportunity for spontaneous conversation. A more effective approach is for Examiners to keep eye contact with candidates, listen to what they have to say and respond accordingly.

Conduct of the examination

From the evidence heard on the recorded samples, many Examiners are clearly at ease in their role and familiar with the requirements of the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination. The role of the conducting Examiner remains crucial in terms of putting the candidate at ease and enabling him/her to work for the available marks. Examiners who have prepared their own roles fully and are confident in what they are doing are better able to help candidates who experience any difficulty. A well-prepared Examiner ensures that his/her candidates are given ample opportunity to demonstrate the full range of their abilities.

Regrettably, the Examiner at a number of centres omitted a part of the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination. If a part is omitted, no marks can be awarded. Examiners are reminded that the IGCSE Arabic speaking examination consists of three sections: **Part One** of the examination is two role plays. **Part Two** of the examination starts with a presentation by the candidate on a topic of his/her choice. The Examiner must allow the candidate to speak for 1–2 minutes on his/her prepared topic and then follow this up with specific spontaneous questions related to the topic. This section of the examination should last **about five minutes** in total. **Part Three** of the examination is a spontaneous conversation of a more general nature and should last **about five minutes**.

The following list of comments is intended to help all Examiners elicit the best possible performance from their candidates:

- **Preparation time**

The best examples of examining were in centres which had clearly made good use of the preparation time available to the Examiner. During this time, Examiners had become familiar with the instructions, the paperwork, the role play situations and their role in them. As a result, they followed the role play cues/script provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet and did not confuse candidates by omitting one or more of the prescribed tasks and/or inserting extra tasks.

Examiners are reminded that they should cue all tasks as specified in the role plays, that no section of the examination should be omitted, that they should keep to the stipulated timings of 5 minutes per conversation section, and that they should give candidates the opportunity to respond in a range of tenses and to unexpected as well as predictable questions in both conversation sections.

Many Examiners are to be commended on their careful preparation of the role plays. Some, however, had not familiarised themselves sufficiently with the role plays and either miscued or missed out certain tasks. In such cases, candidates could not be awarded marks for tasks they had not attempted.

Examiners should ensure that they are familiar with the requirements of the Speaking examination before embarking on any examining.

- **Timings**

It is helpful to candidates to know before the examination that each of the two conversation sections will last for 5 minutes. Examiners should then adhere to these timings during the examination. In the topic presentation, it is always good practice to stop a candidate after they have presented for 2 minutes and to start to ask questions. The stipulated timings were often not observed and this can have a detrimental effect on candidates' performance: a Speaking examination that is too short may not allow a candidate enough time to demonstrate his/her abilities, and a Speaking examination that is too long may cause the candidate to become tired and therefore increase his/her chance of making errors.

- **Transition between different sections of the Speaking examination**

Some Examiners made it clear to candidates when they were moving from one section of the examination to the next. This helps to put candidates at their ease and Examiners should aim to include such transitions in all the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examinations that they conduct. The transitions can be managed easily by using a phrase such as "سوف ننتقل الآن إلى الجزء الثالث من الامتحان: المحادثة العامة".

- **Questioning technique**

Examiners are reminded that questions to elicit different tenses **must be asked** in **both** of the conversation sections.

- **Recorded sample: quality and composition**

The recorded sample should be selected to represent the **full** spread of performance in the centre. This enables the Moderator to check that the application of the scheme is fair and accurate throughout the centre's mark range. The recorded sample should be selected to represent the whole centre. Where more than one Examiner is used, the sample should, wherever possible, include examples from each Examiner. Centres should not select and submit a full recorded sample per Examiner: please include equal numbers of recordings from each Examiner.

In a small number of cases, the cassette/CD submitted by the centre was blank. Centres are reminded of the importance of checking that the recordings are present on the cassette/CD, that all parts of the examination have been recorded and that all recordings are audible before sending to Cambridge.

In general, the quality of the recordings was better than in previous years, largely thanks to the more widespread use of digital technology. It is nevertheless extremely important to check the position of microphones and the quality of the recording, both during the examinations (between candidates) and before samples are despatched to Cambridge. The best quality recordings were produced in small rooms in which mobile phones had been switched off and which were not situated close to noisy areas. Where recordings are saved as .mp3 files, please ensure that these have been labelled in accordance with the naming convention stipulated in the Teachers' Notes booklet. Please make sure to record each exam on a separate file (each candidate's exam should be recorded on one file only). Please ensure that before each examination, the Examiner announces the candidate name, number and role play card number. Please remember to identify all candidates on the recording and mark sheets, using their official examination number. Please note that once an examination has begun, the recording should not be stopped or paused between elements of the examination, but should run continuously until the end of that candidate's examination.

- **Coversheet for moderation sample**

Unfortunately, several centres forgot to include the cover sheet for the moderation sample. This is provided in the Teachers' Notes booklet and should be completed in the centre and submitted together with the recorded sample and other paperwork.

- **Internal moderation**

Where a centre has a large number of candidates and wishes to use more than one Examiner to carry out the Speaking examinations, the centre **must** seek permission from Cambridge to use more than one Examiner **before** the start of the Speaking examination period.

Where centres with large numbers of candidates have been granted permission by Cambridge to use more than one Examiner to conduct and assess the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examinations, the coordinating Examiner is responsible for checking that the mark scheme has been applied consistently by all of the Examiners in the centre. If a particular Examiner's marking is judged by his/her colleagues to be out of line with the other marking at the centre, the marks for candidates examined by that Examiner must be adjusted on **both the Working Mark Sheet and on the MS1** before paperwork is submitted to Cambridge.

Details of the centre's internal moderation procedures must also be sent to Cambridge, as specified on the 'Cover sheet for moderation sample'. Guidelines on how to carry out the Internal Standardisation/Moderation of Cambridge IGCSE foreign language Speaking examinations are available from Cambridge.

- **Clerical errors**

A number of clerical errors were noted this year. Centres are reminded to check all additions and transcriptions very carefully before submitting their materials to Cambridge. Please note that the marks entered on the MS1/computer should be the same as the ones shown on the Working Mark Sheet.

- **Administration**

On the whole, the administrative tasks relating to the Speaking examination were completed very well. When despatching the materials to Cambridge, please ensure that a copy of the completed Working Mark Sheet(s) is enclosed in the parcel, together with the recording and other paperwork.

- **Application of the mark scheme**

Generally, centres' marking was close to the agreed standard and where adjustments were necessary, these were often small. Where centres required greater adjustments, this was usually due to one of the following:

- the award of marks for role play tasks which had not been attempted or which were only partially completed
- the award of half marks or more than the agreed standard
- the topic presentation conversation was not conducted
- the general conversation was not conducted
- the brevity of the conversation sections meant that candidates did not have the opportunity to demonstrate the range of vocabulary and structures required to score marks in the top bands
- candidates were not given the opportunity to use a range of time frames in both conversation sections
- candidates were not given the opportunity to present a topic of their own.

Comments on specific questions

Role plays

Examiners are reminded of the need for careful preparation. Where the stipulated tasks are changed or omitted and/or extra tasks are added, this will confuse candidates. **Marks can only be awarded for completing the tasks as presented on the role play cards.** Candidates should be trained to include a greeting and thanks where appropriate. Centres are reminded that on some tasks a short response may be sufficient to attract a mark of 3. Although full sentences with a conjugated verb are often not required to complete a task, should a verb be used by the candidate it must be correct for a mark of 3 to be appropriate. If the verb is incorrect, the maximum mark that can be awarded for the task is 2. Dubious pronunciation should be queried because communication may be affected when pronunciation is unclear. Candidates are allowed to self-correct but cannot be given marks if the Examiner completes the task for them (e.g. if the Examiner provides an item of vocabulary which the candidate merely repeats).

If a candidate misses out a task, the Examiner should try to guide him/her back to it, in as natural a way as possible. Some Examiners did not introduce role plays, and others created additional role play tasks. In the interests of international standards, and in fairness to candidates, Examiners should not miss out parts of the role play tasks nor replace parts with alternative or different tasks.

If only one part of a task is completed, only 1 mark can be awarded. Please remember that the mark scheme does not contain any half marks and that a maximum of 3 marks can be awarded for each task in the role plays. Where a candidate makes no response to a task, no marks can be awarded for that task. The Examiner should not offer vocabulary items or options, unless these appear in the Teachers' Notes – candidates must be allowed to work for their marks.

Each candidate should be examined in two role play situations (one 'A' role play and one 'B' role play), using one role play card only, which should be selected at random by the Examiner from the cards supplied by Cambridge. Candidates should be given 15 minutes' preparation time just before the examination to allow them to familiarise themselves with the settings of the role plays. Candidates are not supposed to choose from the role play cards.

A Role Plays

The A role plays are designed to be easier than the B role plays. Most centres conducted this part of the exam successfully.

B Role Plays

As always, the B role plays were more demanding in that they required candidates to respond spontaneously to an unexpected question, provide a reaction to a situation, and operate in a tense other than the present. Again, most centres conducted this part of the exam well.

Topic Presentation and Conversation

Candidates had chosen a wide range of topics for their presentation, many of which were interesting and lively. Some topics were rather ambitious but these were generally handled well by the candidates who had chosen them, demonstrating their mastery of the Arabic language.

Some Examiners forgot to allow their candidates to present their topic. It is very important that no part of the examination is omitted, as this can severely limit a candidate's marks. Examiners are reminded that, where a candidate presents his topic for two minutes and shows no sign of finishing his/her topic presentation, the Examiner must interrupt and follow this up with specific spontaneous questions related to the topic.

Some Examiners were well aware of the need to ask questions which could elicit past and future tenses, and did so to good effect. A few Examiners did not allow the candidate time to expand his/her answer, interrupting after every sentence.

On the whole, the timing of this section was either too short or much too long. A Speaking examination that is too short may not allow a candidate enough time to demonstrate his/her abilities, and a Speaking examination that is too long may cause the candidate to become tired and therefore increase his/her chance of making errors.

Examiners are reminded of the importance of indicating to candidates that the topic conversation has finished and the general conversation is about to begin.

General Conversation

Many Examiners were aware of the need to cover two or three different topics in this section of the examination, though it is worth bearing in mind that it may be necessary to cover more topics with weaker candidates who will not be able to answer in as much depth. The topics discussed in this part of the examination should not be the same as that discussed in the topic presentation/conversation and must be chosen by the Examiner, rather than by the candidate.

It is helpful to the candidate if the Examiner guides him/her smoothly between topics. Questioning that moves abruptly from topic to topic can be confusing or unsettling for candidates. It is better to let the conversation flow rather than asking a series of unconnected questions.

In order to award marks in the Satisfactory band or above, the candidate must show that he/she can use past and future tenses accurately. It is not sufficient for Examiners to ask questions to elicit past and future tenses if the candidate cannot use these tenses successfully in his/her reply. It is useful to practise adverbs of time in the classroom because familiarity with these will help candidates identify the time frame in which they should be operating.

Questions should invite candidates to talk. Where questioning restricts candidates to short or 'yes'/'no' responses, they will not have the opportunity to use the range of structures necessary for access to the higher mark bands.

Overall, performance was very good in this section of the examination. In a very small number of cases, the Examiner swapped his/her role with the candidate, and obliged the candidate to ask questions of the Examiner. This does not form part of the IGCSE Arabic Speaking examination.

Regrettably, many of the General conversations heard by the Moderators were too brief to warrant the award of the highest marks. Examiners are reminded that this section of the examination should last approximately **5 minutes**.

Impression

At the end of the examination the Examiner must make an assessment of the candidate's pronunciation, accent and fluency based on his/her overall performance. Banded descriptors are enclosed in Table C of the Marking Instructions in the Teachers' Notes booklet. In general, Examiners awarded appropriate marks for this aspect of the examination.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/41
Continuous Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

When a choice of questions is offered, candidates should select the question they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks set out in the rubric. If they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two tasks they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks. If they cover all the points in 100 words they might be reduced to padding out the ending to reach 140 words, so they should look to identify the areas where they can expand their response with examples. Examiners will not mark anything which occurs outside the word count. Where candidates write answers which are shorter than 130–140 words, they are likely to restrict their chances of gaining the maximum mark available for Language.

Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into inappropriate tenses.

Candidates should compose each sentence carefully. Good spelling gains marks; incorrect spelling does not. Candidates should take their time. The time allowed for the paper is normally ample. When they have finished, they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. They should be encouraged to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded. Handwriting must always be legible.

Some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of language ticks to such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

General comments

The Continuous Writing paper requires candidates to respond to two questions. Candidates could choose either **Question 1(a)** which asked them to write a letter for the school newspaper about selling old books to raise money for charity, or **Question 1(b)** which asked them to write a letter about a cousin's visit. In addition, all candidates were required to answer **Question 2** which asked them to write about an amazing family celebration.

Each response was marked out of 25: 5 marks for Communication, 15 marks for Language and 5 marks for General Impression. The total mark available for the paper was 50.

Most candidates followed the instructions and attempted either **Question 1(a)** or **Question 1(b)** and **Question 2**. Candidates seemed to have managed their time well as the majority had completed the required tasks.

The quality of candidates' writing skills varied significantly. Most appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

- using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel*, e.g. أَيْضَان was written as أَيْضًا and صَبَاحًا was written as صَبَاحن
- misuse of the gender when describing male or female objects or people
- confusing التاء المربوطة and التاء الطويلة
- not applying the correct agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives
- using verbs in inappropriate tenses or using the wrong person of the verb
- not applying the feminine adjective to refer to a non-human plural, e.g. الكُتُب القَدِيمَات instead of الكُتُب القَدِيمَة
- using colloquial spoken dialect
- not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
- using long and short vowels incorrectly
- using prepositions incorrectly.

The predicate of *kana* used in the nominative case, rather than in the accusative case, was the most common error.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally attempted well and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks. Most candidates produced relevant and suitable responses, which demonstrated that they had read the question carefully before beginning to write.

Most candidates who opted for **Question 1(a)** addressed all of the Communication points appropriately. A small number of candidates could not score the full 5 marks for Communication because some of the Communication points they made fell outside of the word limit. Some candidates forgot to include a suitable beginning and/or ending to their letter. Candidates need to remember to present their answer in the format required by the question: in this case, a letter.

Many candidates who answered **Question 1(b)** achieved good marks. A small number forgot to describe how the family made the cousin welcome. Some candidates wrote instead about their own visit to see their cousin, rather than the cousin's visit to see them.

Question 2

This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as it asked them to describe an amazing family celebration and to give their reaction to, and/or feelings about, the celebration.

A small number of candidates did not understand the question and wrote about their graduation party at school or a New Year celebration with friends. In such cases, the question requirements were not satisfied and full marks for Communication could not be awarded.

Most candidates attempted this question well and wrote in an appropriate style. Many candidates showed imagination and creativity and used interesting expressions to describe the celebration and their feelings.

Less successful answers were characterised by confusing narratives due to poor selection of vocabulary. Some essays were so poorly linked or were written with such poor command of tense or pronouns that the Examiner could not understand what the candidate intended. Candidates need to remember not to repeat themselves as this can create confusion.

This question required the use of the past tense and many candidates made mistakes when using *kana*. The predicate of *kana* should be used in the accusative case, not in the nominative case.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/42
Continuous Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

When a choice of questions is offered, candidates should select the question they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks set out in the rubric. If they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two tasks they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks. If they cover all the points in 100 words they might be reduced to padding out the ending to reach 140 words, so they should look to identify the areas where they can expand their response with examples. Examiners will not mark anything which occurs outside the word count. Where candidates write answers which are shorter than 130–140 words, they are likely to restrict their chances of gaining the maximum mark available for Language.

Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into inappropriate tenses.

Candidates should compose each sentence carefully. Good spelling gains marks; incorrect spelling does not. Candidates should take their time. The time allowed for the paper is normally ample. When they have finished, they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. They should be encouraged to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded. Handwriting must always be legible.

Some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of language ticks to such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

General comments

The Continuous Writing paper requires candidates to respond to two questions. Candidates could choose either **Question 1(a)** which asked them to write a letter for the school newspaper about selling old books to raise money for charity, or **Question 1(b)** which asked them to write a letter about a cousin's visit. In addition, all candidates were required to answer **Question 2** which asked them to write about an amazing family celebration.

Each response was marked out of 25: 5 marks for Communication, 15 marks for Language and 5 marks for General Impression. The total mark available for the paper was 50.

Most candidates followed the instructions and attempted either **Question 1(a)** or **Question 1(b)** and **Question 2**. Candidates seemed to have managed their time well as the majority had completed the required tasks.

The quality of candidates' writing skills varied significantly. Most appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

- using *tanween* as a letter and not as *tashkeel*, e.g. أَيْضَان was written as أَيْضَا and صَبَاحَا was written as صَبَاحِن
- misuse of the gender when describing male or female objects or people
- confusing التَاءَ المَرْبُوطَةَ and التَاءَ الطَوِيلَةَ
- not applying the correct agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives
- using verbs in inappropriate tenses or using the wrong person of the verb
- not applying the feminine adjective to refer to a non-human plural, e.g. الكُتُبُ القَدِيمَات instead of الكُتُبُ القَدِيمَة
- using colloquial spoken dialect
- not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
- using long and short vowels incorrectly
- using prepositions incorrectly.

The predicate of *kana* used in the nominative case, rather than in the accusative case, was the most common error.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally attempted well and the majority of the candidates achieved very good marks. Most candidates produced relevant and suitable responses, which demonstrated that they had read the question carefully before beginning to write.

Most candidates who opted for **Question 1(a)** addressed all of the Communication points appropriately. A small number of candidates could not score the full 5 marks for Communication because some of the Communication points they made fell outside of the word limit. Some candidates forgot to include a suitable beginning and/or ending to their letter. Candidates need to remember to present their answer in the format required by the question: in this case, a letter.

Many candidates who answered **Question 1(b)** achieved good marks. A small number forgot to describe how the family made the cousin welcome. Some candidates wrote instead about their own visit to see their cousin, rather than the cousin's visit to see them.

Question 2

This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as it asked them to describe an amazing family celebration and to give their reaction to, and/or feelings about, the celebration.

A small number of candidates did not understand the question and wrote about their graduation party at school or a New Year celebration with friends. In such cases, the question requirements were not satisfied and full marks for Communication could not be awarded.

Most candidates attempted this question well and wrote in an appropriate style. Many candidates showed imagination and creativity and used interesting expressions to describe the celebration and their feelings.

Less successful answers were characterised by confusing narratives due to poor selection of vocabulary. Some essays were so poorly linked or were written with such poor command of tense or pronouns that the Examiner could not understand what the candidate intended. Candidates need to remember not to repeat themselves as this can create confusion.

This question required the use of the past tense and many candidates made mistakes when using *kana*. The predicate of *kana* should be used in the accusative case, not in the nominative case.

ARABIC (Foreign Language)

Paper 0544/43
Continuous Writing

Key messages

In order to do well in this paper, candidates need to demonstrate that they can communicate in writing, showing knowledge of a range of vocabulary and applying the grammar and structures of the Arabic language correctly.

When a choice of questions is offered, candidates should select the question they consider to be the best suited to their knowledge of Arabic. This may not always be the one they find the most interesting. Then they should prepare a brief plan of their answer in accordance with the set tasks. As the recommended length is 140 words, they should plan to spread the answer fairly evenly over the tasks set out in the rubric. If they devote too much of the answer to the first one or two tasks they may not have enough words left to complete the later tasks. If they cover all the points in 100 words they might be reduced to padding out the ending to reach 140 words, so they should look to identify the areas where they can expand their response with examples. Examiners will not mark anything which occurs outside the word count. Where candidates write answers which are shorter than 130–140 words, they are likely to restrict their chances of gaining the maximum mark available for Language.

Candidates should remember that the rubric is not a rough guide but that it sets out a number of required elements, each of which carries one or more specific Communication marks. They should read the question carefully and keep to these tasks, avoiding irrelevance. If the tasks require a certain tense then they should stick to that tense and not drift into inappropriate tenses.

Candidates should compose each sentence carefully. Good spelling gains marks; incorrect spelling does not. Candidates should take their time. The time allowed for the paper is normally ample. When they have finished, they should make full use of the time left to check their work for errors.

Within the limits on content imposed by the set tasks, the paper is an exercise in free composition so candidates should write that which they are confident is correct Arabic and avoid what they do not know. They should be encouraged to present their best Arabic to the Examiner.

Presentation is very important. If the Examiner cannot read what the candidate has written, no marks can be awarded. Handwriting must always be legible.

Some candidates tend to include long lists of proper nouns such as place names or personal names. This practice is to be discouraged as the mark scheme does not allow the award of language ticks to such lists and they can take up a significant proportion of the word allocation.

General comments

The Continuous Writing paper requires candidates to respond to two questions. Candidates could choose either **Question 1(a)** which asked them to write an email to a friend to tell him about a family visit to a restaurant in town, or **Question 1(b)** which asked them to write an email to a friend telling him/her about a farewell party they had organised for another friend. In addition, all candidates were required to answer **Question 2** which asked them to write about a week that they spent at a school in another country.

Each response was marked out of 25: 5 marks for Communication, 15 marks for Language and 5 marks for General Impression. The total mark available for the paper was 50.

Most candidates followed the instructions and attempted either **Question 1(a)** or **Question 1(b)** and **Question 2**. Candidates seemed to have managed their time well as the majority had completed the required tasks.

The quality of candidates' writing skills varied significantly. Most appeared to have sufficient knowledge of Arabic grammatical structures to enable them to complete the paper without undue difficulty, but there were a number of common basic errors which included:

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- misuse of the gender when describing male or female objects or people
- confusing التاء المربوطة and التاء الطويلة
- not applying the correct agreement between feminine nouns and adjectives
- using verbs in inappropriate tenses or using the wrong person of the verb
- not applying the feminine adjective to refer to a non-human plural, e.g. المطاعم الجميلات instead of المطاعم الجميلة
- using colloquial spoken dialect
- not applying the correct possessive pronoun endings
- using long and short vowels incorrectly
- using prepositions incorrectly.

The predicate of *kana* used in the nominative case, rather than in the accusative case, was the most common error.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

This question was generally attempted well and the majority of the candidates achieved good marks. Most candidates produced relevant and suitable responses, which demonstrated that they had read the question carefully before beginning to write.

Most candidates who opted for **Question 1(a)** addressed all of the Communication points appropriately. A small number of candidates could not score the full 5 marks for Communication because some of the Communication points they made fell outside of the word limit. Some candidates forgot to include a suitable beginning and/or ending to their email. Candidates need to remember to present their answer in the format required by the question: in this case, an email.

Many candidates who answered **Question 1(b)** achieved good marks. A small number forgot to cover all of the Communication points. Some candidates wrote instead about attending a party, rather than organising one for a friend.

Question 2

This question allowed more scope for the candidates' imagination than the first question as it asked them to describe a week that they spent at a school in another country and to give their reaction to, and/or feelings about, the visit.

A small number of candidates did not understand the question and wrote about their own school. In such cases, the question requirements were not satisfied and full marks for Communication could not be awarded.

Most candidates attempted this question well and wrote in an appropriate style. Many candidates showed imagination and creativity and used interesting expressions to describe their visit to the school abroad and their feelings about the trip.

Less successful answers were characterised by confusing narratives due to poor selection of vocabulary. Some essays were so poorly linked or were written with such poor command of tense or pronouns that the Examiner could not understand what the candidate intended. Candidates need to remember not to repeat themselves as this can create confusion.

This question required the use of the past tense and many candidates made mistakes when using *kana*. The predicate of *kana* should be used in the accusative case, not in the nominative case.